

March 4, 2019

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor
New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Majority Leader
New York State Senate
LOB 907
Albany, NY 12248

Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker
New York State Assembly
LOB 932
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Heastie,

As leaders who represent institutions of faith that advocate for communities in every corner of New York City, we understand the fundamental importance of public education. Our children need quality public schools - schools where they can learn, grow and thrive. Under the leadership of Mayor Bill de Blasio, the City's public schools are the strongest they have ever been, and students in every neighborhood are being supported on their path to success. That is why we urge you to pass an at least three year or more extension of mayoral control of the New York City school system to continue this momentum.

In fall 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Equity and Excellence for All, a set of new initiatives with ambitious goals for New York City schools. These initiatives address our students' academic, social, and emotional needs from the first book they successfully read by themselves until their high school diploma and college acceptance letter are in hand.

Our kids are responding to these innovative solutions. Graduation rates have never been higher, with significant increases among Hispanic, Black and Asian students. Dropout rates are at historic lows. More students than ever are taking and passing Advanced Placement exams. On state exams, New York City students have closed the gap with their New York State peers in math and outperformed students across the state in English Language Arts three years in a row.

This Mayor and Chancellor have also made clear that they are closely listening to the needs of families and are committed to empowering parents to move school communities forward. From the Chancellor's listening tour when he first arrived in New York, to hiring a new Deputy Chancellor for community empowerment and the Mayor and Chancellor's ongoing five-borough parent leader forums, it's clear that the DOE is taking the concerns of our school communities seriously and putting their ideas into action.

These improvements would not be possible without sustained leadership and the ability to marshal resources and make the tough decisions. Our children can't afford to return to the damaged system of past. We implore you to pass a multi-year extension of mayoral control of New York City schools and let our schools, our communities and our city continue to move forward.

Sincerely,

Rev. James Osei-Kofi, Bethesda Healing Center

Pastor James Richmond, Northeastern Conference SDA

Rev. Dale Smith, Central Family Life Center

Imam Souleimane Konate, Council of African Imams and Masjid AQSA Mosque

Imam Ahmed Aliz Uzir, Global Community Welfare Inc and Iqra Masjid
Community & Tradition

Evelyn Castellano-Rodriguez, Chaplain, United Chaplains State of New York

Dr. Edward Owusu, Global School Of Missions (GSOM)

Overseer Alonzo Jordan, Gods Open House For Everyone

Rev. Marian Buckman, Hollis Congregational Church

Pastor Doris Johnson, Holy Ghost Upper Bronx of Faith Tabernacle

Director Muhammad T Rahman, Islamic Circle of North America

Monjur Choudhury, Jamica Muslim Center

Rev. Sheryl Prehow, Led Of the Lord Ministries

Patrick Thompson, New City Church

Pastor Orlando Findlayter, New Hope Christian Fellowship

Pastor Danilo Archbold, New Jerusalem Cathedral C.O.G.I.C

President Mir Masum Ali, NY Muslims United for Civic Engagement

Chaplain Dorrett Warren, NY State Chaplin Taskfoce

Rev. Dr. Flora Bridges, Rendall Memorial Presbyterian Church

Pastor Regina Williams, Sacred Heart Ministries

Rev. Dr. Martha Rollins Overall, St. Ann's Church of Morrisania

Linda Watson-Lorde, St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church

Rev. Dr. Michael Strong, Strong Families Deliverance Ministries Inc
Pastor Gwen Dingle, The Pentecostal House of Prayer
Executive Direct Zac Martin, Trellis
President and Founder Assetou Sy Traore, USA Mali Charitable Association of NYC
Chaplain Tara Raghbir, Presbytery of New York
Rev. Bernice Coaxum, Keys of the Kingdom Pentecostal Holiness Church
Miriam El-Amin, Samaritan Rescue International
Dr. Alvin Ponder, National Action Network-Bronx
Imam Mohammed Ayub, Yankasa Association of USA Inc.
Terrence Brummell, Brooklyn Fatherhood Partnership
Evangelist Addie Marrow, Church Of God In Christ
Lillian Hopkins, Crossover Baptist Church Community Outreach Help Center
Pastor Joseph Simpson, United Christian Assembly Church
Mazeda A. Uddin, South Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship, and Training (SAFEST)
Laura Limuli, Friends of (Rikers) Island Academy & Darfur People's Assn. of NY
Rev. Canon Crowns Adepeko, Anglican Church of the Epiphany
Amany Abouelkhair, Deaf Muslim Association Outreach
Barbara Biggs Glover, Brooklyn Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc
Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie, Lab/Shul
Executive Director Alan Brava, Free Synagogue of Flushing